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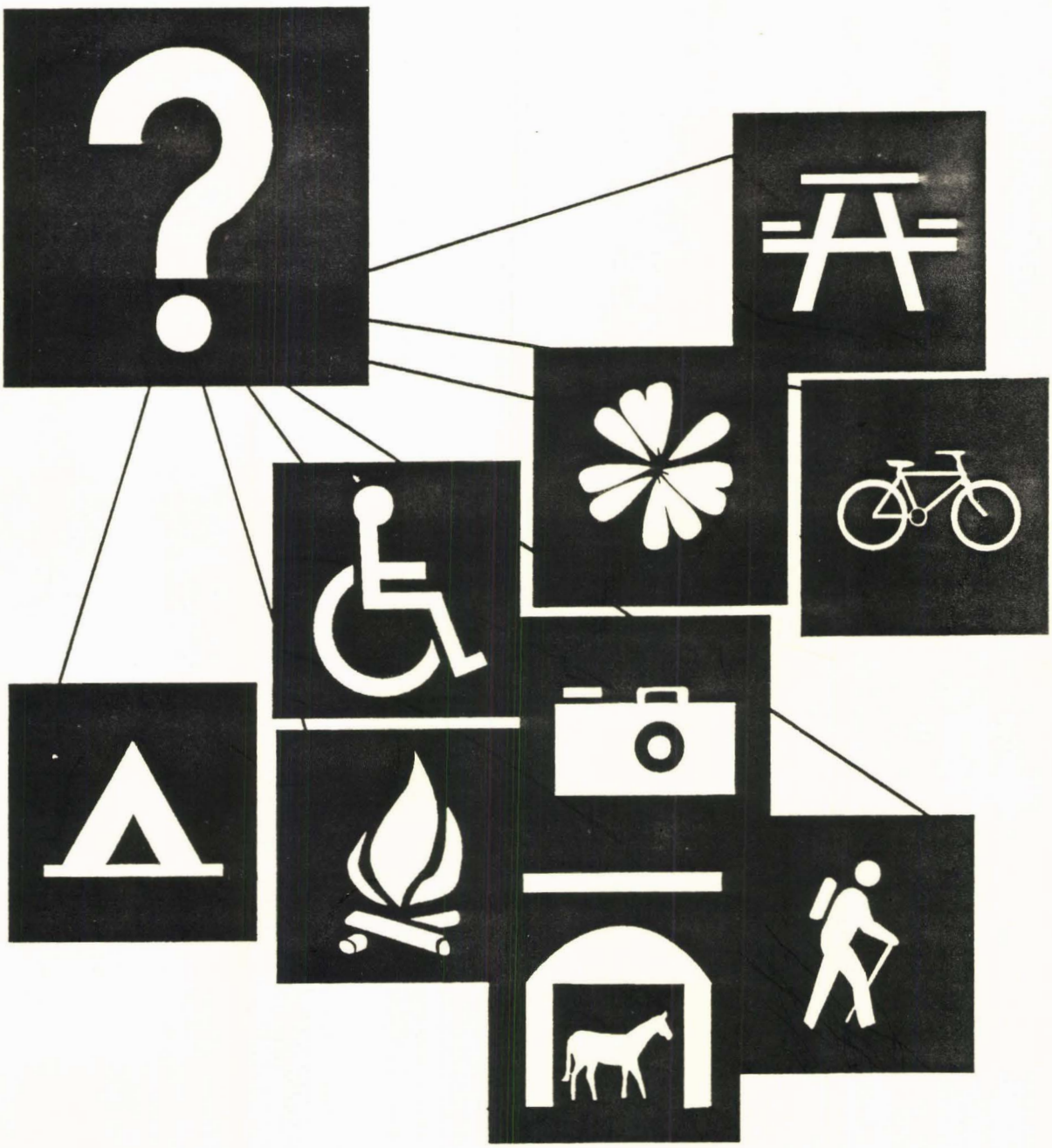
An Analysis and Recommendation for Providing a Public Information System



AN ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION FOR PROVIDING A PUBLIC INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT FIELD OFFICES

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Title: An Analysis and Recommendation for Providing a Public Information System for Bureau of Land Management Field Offices

Abstract: The Bureau of Land Management is an agency with the responsibility of managing public land for the public. The Bureau is charged with a multiple-use mission. Within the Bureau, the public makes contact daily with a Bureau office, facility or employee with an array of concerns.

This paper describes the current situation in some Bureau field offices at two levels; A Resource Area, and a District Office. The focus will be to determine the needs of the public and how to better achieve their needs for obtaining recreational information.

The proposed recommendations for the Bureau field offices will be incorporated into a field handbook as a result of this paper.

Keywords: Information system, Public contact, recreation information, quality information

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: An Analysis and Recommendation for Providing a Public Information system for Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Field Offices

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Summary:

The purpose of this project is to achieve a certain level of awareness by the Bureau field office managers and public contact employees. In the past, the public have not been aware nor concerned about Bureau activities and the Bureau has not placed importance on the effectiveness of the public contact employee. With increases in the general population and an increase in the public awareness level the Bureau is experiencing an image problem. This paper reflects three specific objectives to assist the Bureau in improving public contacts and overall improve the Bureau image.

1. To determine what the needs of the public are for obtaining information from BLM on recreation programs.

2. To determine the abilities of BLM to provide the public with quality and adequate information.

3. To provide recommendations to BLM offices to better serve the public in different communities as a recreation resource agency.

Three approaches were used to evaluate the needs of the Bureau and the public for information systems.

1. From a Bureau manager view point; What contacts does a manager have with the public, and can these improve?

2. From a Bureau employee in a Resource Area Office and/or a District Office: Who should the public communicate with?

3. From a member of the public trying to obtain recreation information on the phone and in person from a Bureau office; How can my questions be answered?

This project was developed as a result of field office experience as a recreation employee working in the California Desert District. This District manages over 12 million acres of public land and according to a nationwide Gallup Poll, the California desert does see approximately 17% of the country's population.

From this project, several assumptions and recommendations evolved:

Assumptions:

1. That the populations involved with Bureau activities are going to continue to increase.

2. Populations are going to increase their recreation use on public lands.

3. Information required by the public from Bureau offices should be of quality; complete, accurate, and informative.

Recommendations:

1. To require all Bureau Field Office Managers to receive no less than 40 hours of training in public contact and public information systems.

2. To require all Bureau Field employees to provide and excel in public information support.

3. To provide a handbook for the Receptionist/Public Information Clerk and all employees on the procedures when providing quality and adequate information to the public.

A successful public information system and program in all Bureau Field offices will enhance and improve the image and support of the Bureau of Land Management.

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INTRODUCTION

This project is a result of working for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for fifteen years and working in the Desert District Office in Southern California for five years in the field of Outdoor Recreation and Visitor Services. The California Desert District is unique within the BLM, in that, it manages alone 12 million acres and services over 5 million visitors per year.

I use the Desert District as my example, but after discussions with BLM employees and public in other states, it is apparent that all Bureau offices need to evaluate the needs of the public and the current public information systems that are used.

A typical Bureau Resource Area office will manage one to four million acres, employ 20 to 40 professional resource personnel, and be located in a rural setting. This combination can sometimes cause a vacuum affect; a multiple-use mission being accomplished on paper, but no effort to include or inform the public of the process, or allow for an adequate flow of information from the public to be heard by the agency. Many times the Bureau will process and present a management plan, including the implementation without the public's knowledge or input. The process of public information can only get better. Within southern California, the public are demanding the information and they are also demanding quality and complete information from Federal agencies.

This project is an effort to present to the Bureau an approach for achieving these public needs.

Purpose of Project

The purpose of this project is to achieve a certain level of awareness by the Bureau field office managers and public contact employees. In the past, the public have not been aware nor concerned about Bureau activities and the Bureau has not placed importance on the effectiveness of the public contact employee. With increases in the general populations and an increase in the public awareness level, the Bureau is experiencing an image problem. This paper reflects three specific objectives to assist the Bureau in improving public contacts and to improve the Bureau image.

1. To determine what the needs of the public are for obtaining information from BLM on recreation programs.

2. To determine the abilities of BLM to provide the public with quality and adequate information.

3. To provide recommendations to BLM offices to better serve the public in different communities as a recreation resource agency.

Background of the Bureau of Land Management

BLM is a land management agency developed in 1946 from the General Land Office. BLM administers more than 270 million acres of public land, mostly in the western states Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, and Alaska. In managing these lands, BLM is guided by the principles of multiple-use management and recognizes the need to protect and enhance the natural and human environment.

To the public, BLM is a bewildering array of programs; managing a variety of resources, ranging from the more traditional resources of timber, range, and minerals, to unusual such as cultural resources, recreation, wilderness and air quality. A typical day for a BLM manager would be that of evaluating wildlife habitat in the mornings, reviewing a report on the impact of off highway vehicles (OHV) on archaeological sites that afternoon, and attending an evening public meeting on the construction of a power transmissions line across public land.

Recreation and public information was not even a thought within BLM for the first 30 years. Until 1976, the passage of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, (FLPMA) BLM was only managing the timber and minerals on the public land. FLPMA recognized recreation as a resource and allowed for some public input. Advisory Councils and committees were formed, using the public as experts in their fields to advise the Bureau. Recreation opportunities on public land was on the increase. In the 1970s BLM was experiencing over 50 million visitor-use days each year. In 1976 thirty additional outdoor recreation planners were hired for field positions through-out the Bureau. Also, in 1975, BLM was maintaining more than 400 developed recreation sites.

Use on the public land has increased dramatically since 1970. Information from the National Coalition on Outdoor Recreation states that over 90 percent of Americans participate in some

form of recreation. The increase that BLM has seen is in OHV use, river running, caving, and snowmobiling, with hiking, and camping still very popular. Today the recreation program within the Bureau has taken a more dominant role. Many new programs and initiatives have been implemented to increase the public's awareness of the recreation opportunities on public land; the Back Country Byway program, the Mountain Bike initiative, the Great American Outdoors, Rails to Trails, and Recreation 2000, a strategic plan for the management of outdoor recreation for the future. The recreation 2000 strategic plan has been a large influence on BLM employees and how they interact with the public. This plan encourages the BLM and the public to develop partnerships to achieve one common goal. This effort is just beginning in many BLM offices and states. And a public outreach effort and quality public information will assist the recreation 2000 plan effectively.

Within Appendix I is a summary of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and also the Goals and Mission Statement for BLM.

THE PUBLIC NEEDS

It is clear that BLM is a Public agency that is tasked to manage the public lands and to meet public demands. In order to meet the needs, communication between the BLM manager and the public has to occur. The BLM manager must know his/her audience and get to understand what the uses on the public land are.

User Needs in the Field

Within the California Desert District their are six field offices and over 12 million acres managed out of these offices. While working in the desert for more than 5 years, I discovered that the most common need in the field by the public is information; information about the land they are using; geology, history, cultural, range management, wildlife in the area, recreation opportunities in the area and most importantly, the land restrictions that are occurring. The public are so uneducated about the Bureau, but have the desire to know. Does BLM do an adequate job in providing the information to the public? No, I don't think we do. Currently we are using the law enforcement staff and a few park rangers in selected areas to provide the information to the public. Law enforcement is providing an enforcement approach to the problem and the park ranger is usually a temporary employee with the BLM and not always the best source of quality information for the public; just a temporary fix. In the California Desert BLM does know where the public uses are and when the heaviest uses occur.

Actually, BLM Managers in the Desert District do know who their audiences are, but there is a lack of knowledge and information provided to the public in the field. Budget and priorities are the two driving forces within the Bureau personnel system. Visitor information is not a priority within the Bureau yet, but, with public demands and population increases on the public land, this will change. And let's be there and be ready when the demands get greater than the Bureau is managing. Below are some current practices that are being used for managing large populations on public land.

1. Inventory of high use areas and monitoring the heavy use days for visitor data; uses occurring, user needs, and violations that could be eliminated with an adequate public information system.
2. Use of information trailers, or tents at heavy use areas on high use days and providing a visitor information specialist at the location.
3. Use of information bulletin/fact sheet for hand outs on heavy use days. This bulletin can have many themes; information on the area; safety tips for the area; BLM mission and management objectives for the area; visitor use for the area and concerns that have been expressed in the past from the public. An example of a Fact Sheet is in Appendix II.
4. Conducting a clean-up or trail construction or trail dedication on a heavy use weekend in an area that has

heavy use, using volunteers of the Bureau and encourage the users to participate. BLM staff plans this activity, puts out a news release and then turns over the day to a willing volunteer group or organization.

5. Placing a weekend camp host at heavy use areas. This is a willing and informed volunteer that camps for a weekend in a popular area and provides quality information to the public users.

6. Conducts a weekend or evening fireside talk to the public. BLM staff plan and promote this activity. It is appropriate at various BLM sites: camping area, (developed or undeveloped), OHV area, lake, cultural site, popular hiking areas, trail heads, back country byways, winter sports areas and/or any area receiving high visitor use.

7. A very effective information center is to install interpretive kiosks at areas that have public use. These could be used for maps, safety tips, and information bulletins. The Kiosk is placed at trail heads along with brochure boxes to help the uninformed visitor.

These current practices are just a few ways that BLM is putting quality information out to the public. Some of these methods have been tried and are currently being used in a few areas.

User Needs Required from Office Personnel/Setting

Most BLM field offices are located within a rural setting, often in the vicinity of a small town or city. It is very common for the local citizen or even a visitor on vacation to either visit the office or call for recreation information, maps or general directions.

Within the California Desert offices, these offices see more people in the office and speak to them on the phone even more than in the field. Currently, the greatest source of information for the public is from BLM office personnel; usually the receptionist, but also from any specialist that could be referred to the visitor. BLM does not place much emphasis on our public information personnel. To date, most BLM offices leave the receptionist work/ public information work to a clerk/typist who receives very little training. Let's give the public some credit. They do realize that we have an untrained person to answer their questions. This is also true for the employee that answers the phone; most commonly it is a clerk/typist that does not know or understand the mission or tasks of the Bureau. Many times the clerk will refer the call or visitor to a field specialist, that may or may not be in the office at the time. Often, the questions are simple and could be answered by a clerk if time was spent to train them, and thoughts could be given, also to having the public contact person be presentable, pleasant, and enthusiastic with a positive approach to a problem.

Usually, just a little effort by a manager could improve a visitor reception area. Many BLM offices still do not have a lobby, public room, reception area or counter for the public to go to. Some offices still do not have signs in front of their buildings to identify the building nor to identify where the public could enter for information. This could be a very simple accommodation that could be made for the public. Below are some current situations that are on-going in a few BLM offices.

1. Creating a good first impression by having a counter, reception area, and using displays to explain what BLM is; by posting an information sign; hours of operation sign on front door, and phone number.
2. Provide seating for the visitor. Keep the area uncluttered, and attractive. Display publications clearly.
3. Hiring a professional to run the front counter; a Public Information Specialist. This person is trained and wears a uniform, and allowing some field time to familiarize the person to what BLM does.
4. The doors open promptly, and consider the hours of operation and how they fit with the community; Can the visitor get in after his work hours, and does he have information available during his free time?
5. The job of helping the visitors is a priority over all other work. This should be certainly the case for the

administrative staff, but extend this philosophy also to the entire staff. The wildlife biologist is encouraged to actively help answer wildlife questions to the visitor on the phone as well as in the office.

6. The public is greeted pleasantly, and with respect. This is encouraged for all personnel.

Publication Needs

The BLM is just getting started with meeting the public demands with information publications. Public Affairs staffs have become common at the State Office level. Some states have public affairs staff in the District offices, while some do not. The public affairs staff could be an important player in information systems for the Bureau, but many managers are still uncertain of the importance of the staff. Currently, within the Bureau, the public affairs staff is the primary controller of all publications. With this control being at the State Office level, this sometimes means a publication is produced that really does not meet the needs of the field office, nor the local populations. To know your audience before a publication is printed, is a must. The communication among the different offices and levels is sometimes not what it should be, but with public demands and criticisms, this is improving. Often, a Bureau publication becomes outdated, and the agency does not have the money, nor

personnel to update and reprint the document. Rather than go without, BLM offices will just continue using the publication and this alone will create distrust and confusion with the user that reads the wrong information. Can BLM improve the publication provided to the public?

1. Communication with technical experts as well as with the user groups. When planning a publication, consultation occurs with the State Office Public Affairs staff; has a theme and acknowledges who the audience is for the publication.
2. Information brochures, bulletins, or flyers are prepared that describe to the user exactly what is happening on the public land.
3. Printing costs are high, and often this is the reason that BLM is reluctant to prepare publications. Managers are encouraging staff to develop partnerships with community organizations and user groups. Often these groups can fund and print a brochure much easier and faster than BLM.

Publications are always going to be a good method for transmitting information to the public. Good quality, and accurate information can produce a better image of BLM to the public. BLM is going in the right direction on this method.

SOME CURRENT BLM EXAMPLES OF PROVIDING INFORMATION

BLM has created many methods for getting the information to the public. Many states have a state wide publication that is distributed once a month; California has the BLM Newsbeat, and Nevada has the BLM Sage publication. These documents are sent out on a statewide mailing list and contain news items about past, current and future events on public land. News media is another method used at the state level. This includes radio, television and local newspapers. This method is usually very effective and positive when the Bureau takes the lead. This is usually handled through the Public Affairs staff and different program leads. Often a trip is scheduled in the field and a reporter will be included to better acquaint him with the uses on the public land. This method has improved the image of the Bureau in many ways; the news article will give BLM good coverage and is in a positive tone; and, also, for future events or activities on public land, a relationship has been formed with the reporter, so the future can usually mean a brighter image of BLM.

Methods of Providing Information in the California Desert District

The Desert District in California is one of the largest Districts in the Bureau and has the most visitor use days in the Bureau. These six offices through-out southern California have had to answer to the public and meet their demands for over 10 years.

The Desert District has a full Public Affairs staff within the District office. The five resource areas have a public contact person that responds to the public in the office and coordinates with the District Public Affairs Staff. Below are some examples of how this District and Resource Area offices get information to the public.

1. News releases are used frequently. These are usually one page, factual, and completed by each office and sent to local newspapers.

2. Fact sheets and information bulletins: These are one page information sheets about an event or issue on public land and are usually distributed in public rooms and/or out in the field.

3. Brochures: These are not used in the Desert District enough. There are a few that are site specific, but usually these take two years to printing and often outdated when they reach the public. Brochures are usually distributed through the mail and in the public room of each office.

4. Radio spots: The radio is used to inform the public about a specific event, usually with an exact date and time.

5. Fairs/Conventions: BLM will set up and man a booth at many of the large Fairs and/or Recreation Conventions. This opportunity is used to discuss issues with the public and hand out publications. Often we will use large displays, and/or a video at these booths.

6. Outreach posts: This is an established business, usually remote, but close to a recreation site or area, where we develop a partnership with the owner. The business will display or sell BLM publications from the store. These outreach posts are a variety of businesses; a small truck stop or mini mart, a museum, a library, the Chamber of Commerce office, or even a city recreation center can be excellent areas to display information.

7. Kiosks: The kiosks are used at known recreation sites visited by the public. These are usually wooden structures, similar to an outdoor bulletin board. Information is posted on the Kiosks and often a brochure rack is attached. Also, maps displayed on the kiosks are very helpful to the public.

8. Personnel: The California Desert has placed many law enforcement personnel in the field in the last ten years. Currently their are approximately 55 law enforcement personnel working the desert. These employees are tasked with both informing the public and enforcing the laws on public land. Often the public gets informed by receiving a citation.

The California Desert District is unique with responding to the public demands. These concepts have proven effective in getting information to the public.

A Public Land User's Views

While considering this topic for a paper, I met with many people about how the Bureau is doing to get the information out. I talked to people at public meetings, in the field and at social events over a six month period. Actually, I probably have been interested in the public needs as long as I have been working for BLM. I did not do a survey, because there is no need for a formal opinion poll, but all the information and ideas I received have been formed to my needs, and no one will be identified in the paper as they all requested. Comments I received will now be my comments with the understanding that I did have an interest in getting an idea of what the public thought BLM should or could be doing and how much did the public have available to them now.

In general, in the California Desert, when the public are using the public land they do not know that the land is managed by BLM nor do they know what BLM is. This is mostly true of people that are recreating in an unorganized fashion. These are the users that are not a member of a club or organization and they go out on their own. They usually hear about an area from a friend or neighbor, and get there by their suggestion with very little knowledge about the land or the land use issues. Some of these users don't want to know and some that do, don't know how to find the necessary information.

Another user of public land is a person that does belong to a club or organization and is out with this club due to their planning abilities. Sometimes the group or part of the group will know about the Bureau and about the land use, but not always interested or participative in the Bureau's planning process. This is often by choice, but when a person does want to be active in the planning, it is difficult to find out where, and how. Unless a person is on the Bureau mailing list, it is not easy to get involved in a particular land use issue.

The third and final type of user that I have encountered on public land, is the informed user that does know about the BLM and does want to be active. This type is often found in the back country and would like to see less use of all kinds on the public land. They play an active role in the management of the land and take their time to get informed and seek out the information on their own. Comments by this group were both positive and negative, but overall they stated that the BLM does need to have a system for getting information out to the public.

An understanding of the types of users on BLM managed land can be very helpful when trying to get information out. The casual user (unorganized) will take some effort to find and get the information to, except current accurate information at key locations at a recreation site. Also, on the ground personnel

can inform these visitors about the public land; often this is law enforcement personnel.

The organized user is sometimes easier to get the information to. These clubs or organizations are usually on a BLM mailing list and will receive the current information by mail. These clubs can be very helpful to the Bureau, in that, they can be volunteers for different field projects and also help get accurate information to other users within their groups.
The third user, the active participant is also usually easy to inform. They are probably on a mailing list and will already know about the land use practices of the area they are using. This group can also be helpful in informing the public, if the information is accurate.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BLM FIELD OFFICES

The overall intent of the project was to make available to BLM field offices a manual or handbook on how to deal with the public and how to get quality and accurate information to the public. The first step was to show the need and acknowledge the issue or problem. And the outcome of this project will be recommendations that the field office managers could institute at any time.

A Positive Approach to the Public

The most important issue that I found while doing this project was the low priority that BLM placed on service to the public in all field offices. Overall, it was shown that the public were second to the mission of the Bureau and staff. Sometimes offices were not open when should be, hours of operation are not for the public, signs not present to know where the office is, and receptionist sometimes short and abrupt to the public. My number one recommendation to any BLM manager is to take a positive approach to the public. Encourage the receptionist to smile, respond enthusiastically, accurately and with some concern.

Within Appendix III is a list of all recommendations that could be helpful in outreach and improving the overall image of BLM.

Training

Another method to improve the responses to the public, would be training. All employees could benefit from a Customer Service Class, and also many could take a Communication seminar. Many training classes could be taken at local colleges and or through Adult Education programs. If an employee has not had experience in dealing with the public, it will probably not come naturally. All employees should be encouraged to get training in the area of dealing with the public, pleasing the public, or just how to communicate effectively. A list of possible training courses is in Appendix IV.

SUMMARY

A successful public information system within the Bureau of Land Management is dependant on managers of the field offices that are constantly dealing with the public. The most important aspect of quality information would be to know your audience. Each office has it's own unique community and the manager should encourage cooperation among the employees and the community. Office hours should be set so that the majority of the community could get to the office. If the majority of the community is employed by another Government agency and works 7am - 4pm, than BLM should consider keeping the office and phones operating beyond those hours.

Various different methods can be used to get the information out to the public, other than through the office receptionists. The BLM Field Office manager should consider what is working and what could work to improve the information system. Many BLM offices have Public involvement teams that participate in planning exercises. These groups could be tasked with helping to develop a public information system for the office.

This project was a learning experience for me. I have a better appreciation for the field managers and especially for the Public Contact/Receptionist employee in each office. These individuals are usually the first person that the public sees and often can create an impression of the Bureau instantly.

Can the Bureau including all employees, do a better job in assisting the public and in providing quality and accurate information to the public? Yes, we really can. I have just given some suggestions and reasons for improving. And, I do believe that it is necessary to consider a change Bureauwide. We must place a higher importance on the positions that are required to assist the public and we must change our attitude to a more positive outlook when dealing with the public in an office as well as in the field. We can not only think that we are present in the field to enforce the laws, but also, to assist the visitor and provide information.

I would like to prepare a handbook or the Bureau to draft a public information manual as a result of this effort. More importantly, something is needed to emphasis to current and new managers that providing quality and accurate information to the public <u>is</u> important. We can all within the Bureau make an effort, and managers can place a greater emphasis on producing and providing quality information.

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PERSONAL CONTACTS

Personal contact was made to the following list of individuals to discuss their personal experience with BLM offices and information personnel.

Council, Jean-Rivers, Associate District Manager, Bureau of Land Management, California Desert District, Riverside, California.

Maxwell, Barbara, Public Information Officer, Bureau of Land Management, California Desert District, Riverside, California.

Stillwell, Jeanne, Public Land User, Sierra Club, Ridgecrest, California

Wilson, Martha, Public Information Specialist, Bureau of Land Management, Colorado State Office.

APPENDIX I

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT MISSION STATEMENT

SUMMARY OF FEDERAL LAND POLICY AND MANAGEMENT ACT

LONG TERM GOALS FOR THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

PREAMBLE

The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) vision for the future is to carry out a land management ethic based on balancing the use of lands and resources to meet the environmental, economic development, and social needs for the Nation.

To provide the BLM direction needed to achieve its mission as the manager of the public lands, it has been determined that the BLM requires long term goals that will facilitate this. Long term is defined as the next 10 year period. The BLM's goals will chart the course for its management activities and direction for this period. These goals will provide direction and guidance needed for the development and implementation of land use plans and for the development and execution of the budget process.

MISSION STATEMENT
of the
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for the stewardship of our public lands. It is committed to manage, protect, and improve these lands in a manner to serve the needs of the American people for all times. Management is based on the principles of multiple use and sustained yield of our nation's resources within a framework of environmental responsibility and scientific technology. These resources include recreation; rangelands; timber; minerals; watershed; fish and wildlife; wilderness; air; and scenic, scientific, and cultural values.

GOALS

Multiple Use and Sustained Yield:

The BLM as an agency will manage for a sustainable variety of multiple uses of the public lands to obtain an ecologically sound environment and contribute to a strong economy.

Partnerships:

The BLM will develop partnerships with public, private, and industry groups; Native Americans; and individual volunteers to share responsibility and will provide expertise and experiences for sound management of natural resources.

Resource Conditions:

The BLM will improve resource conditions and prevent environmental degradation so that the public lands serve as a model for environmentally sound land use management.

Human Resources:

The BLM will employ a diverse workforce and increase the commitment to their professional development to achieve quality service and management.

Science and Technical Development:

The BLM will strengthen research, science, and technical development efforts to accommodate the growing emphasis on global environmental issues and to incorporate proven technological developments into its program practices.

Service:

The BLM will foster a service ethic that is responsive to the public and meets the needs for public participation and information sharing.

We, as public servants, are committed to these goals and understand that the foundations of administration is public law and regulation, careful stewardship of the public's financial resources and ethical individual action.

FLPMA DECLARATION OF POLICY
SUMMARY

- RETAIN PUBLIC LANDS
- MANAGE ON THE BASIS OF MULTIPLE USE & SUSTAINED YIELD
- MANAGE TO:
  - PROTECT RESOURCE VALUES (Scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air & atmospheric, water & archeological)
  - PRESERVE & PROTECT CERTAIN LANDS IN THEIR NATURAL CONDITION
  - PROVIDE FOOD & HABITAT FOR FISH, WILDLIFE AND DOMESTIC ANIMALS
  - PROVIDE FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION AND HUMAN OCCUPANCY AND USE
  - RECOGNIZE THE NATION'S NEED FOR DOMESTIC SOURCES OF MINERALS, FOOD, TIMBER & FIBER
- PROVIDE FOR:
  - INVENTORY & PLANNING
  - LAND CLASSIFICATION
  - LAND WITHDRAWAL
  - RULES & REGULATION DEVELOPMENT
  - ADJUDICATION PROCEDURES
  - JUDICIAL REVIEW
  - FAIR MARKET VALUE
  - LAND DISPOSAL, ACQUISITION & EXCHANGE
  - ACECs
  - IN LIEU OF TAXES

THE FOCUS OF FLPMA: Signed into law on October 21, 1976, a Public Law 95-579, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) stated that its purpose was to establish public land policy, establish guidelines for its administration, and provide for management, protection, development and enhancement of the public lands. The "Declaration of Policy" (Section 102) and the definition of "multiple use" (Section 103) clearly emphasize the Congressional intent of FLPMA in directing the BLM's administration of public lands. It states that it is the policy of United States that;

1. The public lands be retained in Federal ownership (unless land use planning determines that disposal of a particular parcel will serve the national interest) [Sec... 102(a)(1)];

2. The management of public lands will be on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield [Sec. 102(a)(7)];

3. The public lands will be managed in a manner that will:

   - protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resources, and archeological values [Sec. 102(a)(8)];

   - preserve and protect certain public lands in their natural condition [Sec. 102(a)(8)];

   - provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals [Sec. 102(a)(8)];

   - provide for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use; and

   - recognize the Nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber from the public lands [Sec. 102(a)(12)].

The key point, as expressed in the FLPMA definition of "multiple use" [Sec.102(c)], is the management of the public lands and their various resource values so that they are utilized in a combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people. In other words, the conservation or wise use of these public lands and resources.

FIVE FLPMA PRINCIPLES OF MULTIPLE USE

1. Manage the public lands and their various resource values so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people.

2. Make the most judicious [wise] use of the land for some or all of the resources of related services over areas large enough to provide sufficient latitude for periodic adjustments in use to conform to changing needs and conditions.

3. Use some of the land for less than all of the resources.

4. Provide for a combination of balanced and diverse resource uses that takes into account the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and non-renewable resources.*

5. Ensure the harmonious and coordinated management of the various resources without permanent impairment of the productivity of the land and the quality of the environment with consideration being given to the relative values of the resources and not necessarily to the combination or uses that will give the greatest economic return or the greatest unit output.

* Renewable and non-renewable resources includes, but are not limited to, recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, wildlife and fish, and natural, scenic, scientific, and historical values.

APPENDIX II

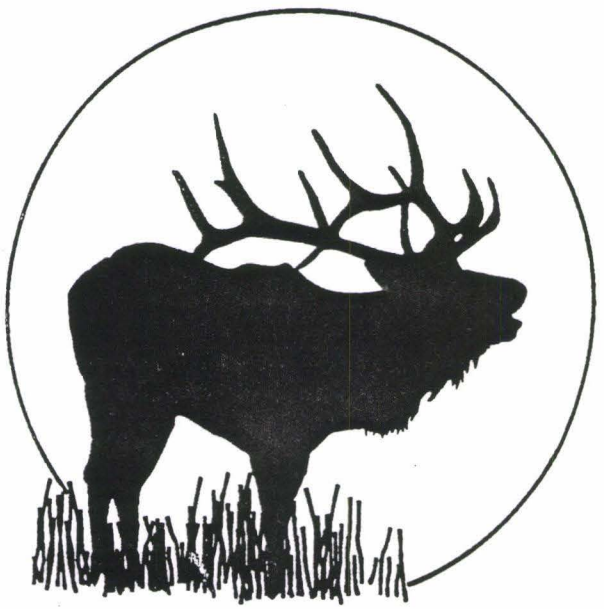
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT FACT SHEET

FACT Sheet

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

ELY DISTRICT OFFICE
HC 33 Box 33500, Ely, Nevada 89301-9408

ELY ELK VIEWING AREA



The **Ely Elk Viewing Area** provides an excellent opportunity to see large numbers of Rocky Mountain Elk. The elk can be seen along U.S. Highway 93, starting six miles south of Ely, Nevada. Look for the Watchable Wildlife binocular sign posted at the entrance to a viewing pull off and a mile-long viewing lane.

The hours of dawn and dusk are the best times to see the elk as they graze the sagebrush flats and crested wheatgrass seedings in south Steptoe Valley. During the day, the elk usually prefer to rest in the higher piñon and juniper woodlands.

The best times of the year to watch elk at the Ely site are September through April, except during elk hunting season usually held during the last week of November and the first week of December. A severe winter with heavy snowpack discourages the elk from coming down into the valley.

During the warmer months of May through August, the elk move up into the Humboldt National Forest in the Schell Creek Range, and may be viewed along the 33-mile Success Loop Drive.

WILDLIFE TO WATCH

Steptoe Valley is home to many wildlife species. Rocky Mountain elk are the largest mammals living here, adults weigh 500 to 1000 pounds and stand 4 to 5 feet tall. A large bull can have antlers up to 5 feet long. Other large mammals you might see are mule deer and pronghorns. Mule deer are smaller, and the bucks have shorter antlers, than elk.

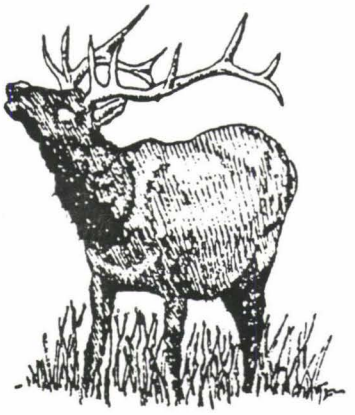
Pronghorns are easy to identify because of the white markings on the head, neck, sides and rump. The males have pronged horns rather than antlers.

Smaller mammals that may be seen in the sagebrush flat are badgers, least chipmunks, black-tailed jackrabbits and coyotes. Overhead look for golden eagles, ravens, ferruginous hawks in the summer and rough-legged hawks in the winter. A special visitor from November through March is the endangered bald eagle.

NEVADA FACT SHEET

History of Ely's Elk

The Schell Creek elk herd numbers over 1,000 animals, with 300 to 400 elk commonly seen in the viewing area. Elk were rare in east-central Nevada when the first white men came through in 1859. Copper mine workers in McGill, just north of Ely, donated a days wages to pay for shipping 32 elk from Yellowstone National Park to White Pine County in 1932. Eight years later Nevada held its first hunt, issuing 60 bull tags.



Elk hunting continues to be popular. More than 5,000 people apply for approximately 100 permits issued each year by the Nevada Department of Wildlife. In 1991 one permit was sold at auction for $20,000.

Elk and Cattle Sharing the Range

In the late 1960s about 5,000 acres of crested wheatgrass seedings were planted by the rancher leasing the allotment and the BLM. While the seedings were primarily to provide forage for cattle, through management of elk and cattle use in the area, each receives a portion of the available food without damaging the rangeland resource.

The elk feed on the seedings and native sagebrush during the winter and spring months before migrating to higher elevations for the summer. Cattle graze the area from March to mid-July.

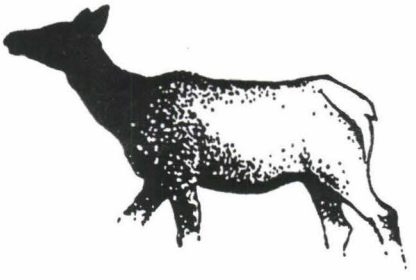
The Ely Elk Viewing Area is being developed on public lands by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Ely District, in cooperation with the Nevada Department of Transportation, the Nevada Division of Forestry, the Nevada Department of Wildlife and the Ely Elk Watchable Wildlife Advisory Group. The BLM Ely District is designing interpretive signs and plans to install viewing mounds at two parking areas. We are interested in hearing your suggestions for improvements or facilities you would like to see at the elk viewing sites.

For more information about wildlife viewing or other attractions in this area please stop by, call or write:

BLM Ely District Office
McGill Highway (U.S. 93) north of Ely
HC33 Box 33500
Ely, NV 89301
(702) 289-4865

STOP ELK POACHING

Call
Operation Game Thief
1-800-992-3030



APPENDIX III

RECOMMENDATIONS

Appendix III

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A QUALITY PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM

I. Recommendations for managing high use areas and knowing your public.

- Inventory high use areas and monitor the heavy use days for visitor data, uses occurring, user needs, and violations that could be eliminated with an adequate public information system.

- Set up information trailers, or tents at heavy use areas on high use days and provide a visitor information specialist at the location.

- Prepare an information bulletin/fact sheet for hand-outs on heavy use days. Example in Appendix II.

- Conduct a clean up or trail construction or dedication on a heavy use weekend in an area that has heavy use, using volunteers of the Bureau and encourage the users to participate.

- Set up a weekend camp host at heavy use areas, using volunteers.

- Install interpretive kiosks at intersections or trailheads with maps and fact sheets.

- Conduct weekend or evening fireside talks in heavy use areas, using either volunteers or BLM staff.

II. Recommendations for improving the reception of visitors in an office setting.

- Create a good lasting first image for the visitor to the office; have a counter, reception area, use displays to explain what BLM is; post an information sign; hours of operation sign on front door; and telephone number on door.

- Have some seating for the visitor; Keep the area uncluttered and attractive; Display publications clearly.

- Hire a professional to run the front counter; a Public Information Specialist. Train this employee; provide a uniform, and allow some field time to become familiar with what BLM is doing.

- Open the doors promptly, and consider the hours of operation with how they fit the community work hours.

- Give the job of helping the visitor, a priority over all other work.

- Always greet the visitor pleasantly, and with respect, and identify yourself.

III. Recommendations for publications for the public.

- Communicate with the experts as well as your user groups that will be using the publication. Consult with the Public Affairs Staff in the State Office; have a theme, purpose and know your reader.

- Prepare information bulletins or fact sheets that describe to the user exactly what is happening on the public land; produce quality and be accurate. Try to always include Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How.

- Printing cost are high, and often this is the reason that BLM is reluctant to prepare publications. Managers can encourage staff to develop partnerships with community clubs to participate in the developing and/or printing of an information bulletin.

IV. Recommendations for Getting Information Out.

- News releases are good tools for getting information to the people. These can be one page, factual, and prepared by local offices for local newspapers.

- Radio spots; Short, factual statements can be done on the local radio getting current information out to the local community.

- Fairs/ Conventions; BLM can staff booths at local fairs and conventions, displaying information and providing handouts to the public.

- Set up outreach posts in and around local communities. These are good in remote and rural areas. Provide the maps and/or handouts for the business to either sell or give away.

- Hire personnel for the field and office that are strictly for public information. BLM/OPM has classified a position as Public Information Specialist that would fit effectively in our front offices. Visitor Information Specialist is a series that can provide information in the field, but not appear as threatening as our Law Enforcement personnel.

APPENDIX IV

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Appendix IV

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The following are a list of possible training courses that might be appropriate for Bureau employees when dealing with the public effectively.

- Customer Awareness Training, Hospitality Research and Development Center, University of Nevada, Reno, Las Vegas. *
- Dealing with Difficult People, OPM, Various locations.
- Meeting Management and Facilitation Skills, BLM, OPM, various locations.
- Managing for Success in the Recreation Program, BLM, Phoenix Training Center, Phoenix, Arizona.
- Achieving Effective Interpersonal Communication, BLM, Phoenix Training Center, Phoenix, AZ.
- Natural Resource Communication Workshop, BLM, Phoenix Training Center, Phoenix, AZ.
- Quality Service: The Manager's Role, OPM, various locations.
- Effective Telephone Techniques, OPM, various locations.

* These courses for Customer Service can be found at many Community Colleges and local Adult School programs.